

Super-tracking progress: Eastern Railway's Chandanpur-Saktigarh 4th line project set to eliminate train delays and supercharge freight traffic

DOI CORRESPONDENT

Kolkata , 4 June: Imagine a busy highway choked with cars, where you are forced to sit and stare at the tail lights ahead for a solid hour. That is exactly what happens every single day on one of Eastern Railway's most crowded routes under the Howrah Division. Right now, a vital stretch of tracks in West Bengal between Chandanpur and Saktigarh, along the Howrah-Bardhaman Chord line under the Howrah Division, is practically suffocating because it is operating at a brutal 113% capacity. Every single day, 83 passenger trains and 32 freight trains try to squeeze through this packed corridor, which forces about 25 goods trains to sit and face frustrating waits of roughly 60 minutes each way. This severe bottleneck triggers a miserable domino effect of delays across the entire regional rail network, holding back both commuters and the economy.

To shatter this congestion, Eastern Railway is moving at lightning speed under the dynamic leadership of General Manager Shri Milind Deouskar, whose teams are working round-the-clock to

build a brand-new fourth track that will run alongside the existing lines and the previously built 3rd line via Boinchi and Banel Junction.

Under the close technical and administrative monitoring of Sri Manoj Khan, Chief Administrative Officer (Construction), Eastern Railway, execution teams are driving structural works forward with high precision. This major capacity augmentation project was officially sanctioned by the Ministry of Railways back on March 06, 2025, under the ambitious national Mission 3000MT cargo targets. It has just reached a critical milestone on June 04, 2026, with the publication of the official Gazette Notification under Section 20A of the Railways Act, 1989, which kicks off the formal land acquisition process. Spanning a physical length of 42.66 kilometers with an overall project scope of 48.3 kilometers, this massive engineering feat is being built at an estimated cost of ₹851.74 crore.

To make this extra track a reality, Eastern Railway must acquire approximately 4.38 hectares of private land spread across the Hooghly and Purba

Bardhaman districts. This is being executed in close coordination with the Government of West Bengal, which has appointed the Additional District Magistrate (LA) of Purba Bardhaman as the Competent Authority for Land Acquisition, or CALA. Following this newly issued Section 20A notification, the statutory process for public objections and claims will immediately commence, which will then be followed by the Section 20D notification and the final Section 20E notification for official land vesting. Meanwhile, advanced track-signaling, station layouts, and blueprints for 95 smaller bridges and 8 major bridges are already receiving rapid digital safety approvals, while structural engineering tenders are actively rolling out. The Engineering, Procurement, and Construction, or EPC, tender for the Chandanpur-Pallaroad section has already been invited, and the remaining Pallaroad-Saktigarh tender will follow the exact moment the land acquisition is completed.

This vital fourth line will route directly through critical local areas including Porabazar, Belmuri, Dhaniakhali,

Sibaichandi, Charagram, Hajigarh, Gurap, Jhapandanga, Jaugram, Nabagram, Masagram, Chanchai, and Palla Road. Upon its final completion, the track line capacity will drop from its suffocating overload down to a smooth and manageable 94%. Daily passenger trains will scale up from 83 to 91 to ensure highly punctual commuter journeys, while daily freight traffic will expand from 32 to 37 trains. This expansion creates an unhindered pipeline for cargo moving from Howrah, Sealdah, and South Eastern Railway bound for East Central and North Eastern Railways. Furthermore, it will smoothly absorb heavy industrial goods like coal, fertilizer, and cement flowing from major ports like Paradeep, Haldia, and Dhamra, alongside future traffic generated from the upcoming Gatishakti Cargo Terminal at Janai Road. Emphasizing the team's tireless work to redefine efficiency and secure a more dependable Indian Railways, Shri Shibrum Majhi, the Chief Public Relations Officer of Eastern Railway, proudly noted that this project stands as the future lifeline of seamless travel and economic logistics.

Howrah Division Hits Record Ticket Earnings and Boosts Revenue with New Retail Contract

DOI CORRESPONDENT

Kolkata , 4 June: Under the dynamic leadership of Shri Milind Deouskar, General Manager of Eastern Railway, the Howrah Division continues to reach outstanding operational and financial heights. In its latest achievement, the division successfully awarded a major Non-Fare Revenue (NFR) contract through an e-auction. This strategic move aims to explore innovative revenue streams, optimize local railway resources, and deliver better public amenities.

The newly awarded contract covers the setting up, operation, and maintenance of a modern 80 sq. ft. Retail Store at the busy Howrah Station. Valid for a period of 10 years, this initiative secures an annual license fee of Rs. 22.70 Lakhs, bringing the total contractual value to an impressive Rs. 3.05 Crore. Shri Vishal Kapoor, Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of Howrah, emphasized that this contract will greatly improve passengers' travel experience while efficiently maximizing railway asset value. This landmark

initiative was successfully executed under the guidance of Dr. Uday Shankar Jha, Principal Chief Commercial Manager.

This commercial success runs parallel to the division's historic performance in ticket-checking collections. Led by the dedicated Howrah Division Ticket Checking Team, ticket revenue has grown rapidly. In April 2026, earnings crossed the ₹4 Crore milestone at ₹4.40 Crore (a 21.55% growth). This momentum accelerated sharply in May 2026, recording an all-time high of ₹5.35 Crore (a massive 56.89% growth over May 2025), crossing the ₹5 Crore mark in a single month for the first time. The cumulative earnings for April-May 2026 have reached a spectacular ₹9.76 Crore.

"Through a balance of strict ticket checking and creative non-fare initiatives like the new retail contract, Howrah Division is setting new standards in passenger service and revenue generation," said Shri Shibrum Majhi, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO), Eastern Railway.

Regulation of trains due to developmental work In adra division

DOI CORRESPONDENT

Kolkata , 4 June: In view of developmental works in Adra division, the following trains will be regulated as under:

Cancellation of Trains
63592/63591 Asansol-Bokaro Steel City-Asansol MEMU will remain cancelled on 04.06.2026, 08.06.2026 & 11.06.2026
68023/68024 Jhargram-Purulia-Jhargram MEMU will remain cancelled on 08.06.2026 & 11.06.2026
68053/68054 Adra-Barabhum-Adra MEMU will remain cancelled on

08.06.2026 & 11.06.2026
Short Termination/Short Origination of Trains

18035/18036 Kharagpur-Hatia-Kharagpur Express, journey commencing on 04.06.2026, 08.06.2026 & 11.06.2026 will be short-terminated at/short-originated from Adra
68055/68056 Asansol-Tatanagar-Asansol MEMU, journey commencing on 08.06.2026 & 11.06.2026 will be short-terminated at/short-originated from Adra
12883/12884 Santragachi-Purulia-Howrah Express, j

Revised regulation of trains over sealdah division

DOI CORRESPONDENT

Kolkata , 4 June: In connection with launching of girder of Bridge No. 3 between Sealdah & Bidhan Nagar Road stations, 15 hours (from 22:15 hrs. of 06.06.2026 to 13:15 hrs. of 07.06.2026) Traffic and Power Block was planned on UP & DN suburban lines including Traffic & Power Block for 1 hour on UP Main Line in Sealdah-Bidhanagar Road section of Sealdah Division, which was earlier informed through Press Release, has been revised as under:

Additional Cancellation of trains on 06.06.2026:

- Sealdah - Kalyani Simanta: 31341 UP
- Naihati - Kalyani Simanta: 31192 DN
- Sealdah - Ranaghat: 31629 UP/ 31634 DN
- Sealdah - Naihati: 31444 DN

Apart from these, 31315 UP Sealdah - Kalyani Simanta local will be short originated from Naihati instead of short terminated at Naihati on 07.06.2026 and 30128 DN Kalyani Simanta - Majerhat local will run as usual on 07.06.2026 instead of short originated from Naihati on 07.06.2026.

Moreover, For Track maintenance work at Ballygunge station limit, 06 hours (from 23:10 hrs. of 06.06.2026 to 05:10 hrs. of 07.06.2026) Traffic Block was planned on Down Passenger line at Ballygunge station limit over Sealdah Division which was earlier informed through Press Release, has been revised as under:

34163 UP Komagata Maru Budge Budge-Sealdah Local will be short terminated at New Alipur instead of Ballygunge on 06.06.2026 (Saturday) and 34112 DN Sealdah-Komagata Maru Budge Budge Local will be short originated from New Alipur instead of Ballygunge on 07.06.2026 (Sunday).

Bad weather forces Rahul to cancel Almora visit; he addresses rally via phone

Dehradun, 4 June: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday had to postpone his scheduled visit to Uttarakhanda's Almora and return to the Pantnagar airport midway after his helicopter encountered severe weather conditions.

The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha later addressed a public rally, titled 'Parivartan ka Shanknaad', over a phone call facilitated by Congress general secretary and Uttarakhanda in-charge Kumari Selja. Though a major portion of the Congress leader's address over the phone was not clearly audible, he apologised to the people gathered in Almora for his inability to reach the venue and promised that he would visit them again soon. "I was scheduled to arrive this morning. However, while we were travelling by the helicopter, the pilot informed us that the weather had deteriorated and we would have to return to Pantnagar," Rahul said.

Addressing the public, the Congress leader alleged that the vision behind the creation of Uttarakhanda was being undermined. He said the people of the state had envisioned a future where they retained self-determination rather than being governed by external forces. "The Constitution states that India, that is Bharat, is a Union of States. You made immense sacrifices to form this state. Regrettably, Uttarakhanda is not being managed by its own people today; it is being operated via remote control from Delhi," he said.

Fear, grief linger in Malviya Nagar day after hotel blaze kills 21

New Delhi, 4 June: A charred smell in the air, dangling electricity wires, eerie silence in the narrow lane and haunting memories of desperate cries for help, residents of south Delhi's Malviya Nagar remained gripped by fear and trauma on Thursday, a day after a devastating hotel fire claimed 21 lives.

The lane where the blaze tore through the Flourish Stay Bed and Breakfast on Wednesday morning bore signs of the tragedy that unfolded hours earlier. With police barricades blocking access and investigators combing through the gutted structure, residents struggled to come to terms with what they had witnessed. For many, sleep remained elusive. A shopkeeper who runs a small general store barely 10 metres from the hotel said the scenes he witnessed

would remain etched in his memory forever. "Jaley hue log, building se jump karte hue log, bodies dekh kar poori raat neend nahi aayi. Choti si awaz se bhi darr lag raha tha. (Charred bodies, people jumping off the building... I couldn't sleep all night after looking at the bodies. Even a tiny sound now scares me)," he said, his voice trembling.

Another resident, Kanhaiya, said the tragedy had traumatised not only the families who lost loved ones but also those living in the neighbourhood. "Children are asking what happened here. My wife could not sleep throughout the night," he said, adding that the screams and cries of trapped guests continue to ring in the ears of residents. "Whenever we pass through this street, these memories will come back. We can



never forget those cries," he said. The area around the hotel remained cordoned off on Thursday as teams from Delhi Police, the crime branch and forensic experts examined the site. Residents gathered near barricades, exchanging accounts of the horrific morning while occasionally glancing towards

the blackened building. A police officer said the area had been sealed as a precautionary measure and to facilitate structural assessment and evidence collection. Investigators are trying to reconstruct the sequence of events that led to one of the deadliest fire tragedies in the national capital in recent years.

Police are questioning residents, shopkeepers, hotel employees and other witnesses as part of the probe. The police have arrested hotel owner Lavkesh Bajaj and booked him under charges including culpable homicide not amounting to murder. During questioning, Bajaj reportedly told investigators that he had acquired the building in 2022 and was operating a hotel-cum-guest house there. Police are verifying his claims regarding permissions and licences obtained for the premises. Investigators are also searching for hotel manager Jai Mishra, who, according to the police, was handling the day-to-day operations of the establishment. Police said the hotel allegedly had permission for only six rooms but was operating around 25 rooms.

Separate secretariat to be set up in Karnataka to address public grievances: CM Shivakumar

Bengaluru, 4 June: Karnataka Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Thursday said that his government would set up a separate secretariat to address public grievances.

Shivakumar also asked officials to prepare action plans for their respective departments within fifteen days. Further, he directed them not to succumb to pressure and to work with integrity, conscience, and a positive approach. A day after assuming office, the CM held a meeting with top bureaucrats and police officials in the state. "A separate secretariat will be established to address public grievances, and a minister will be appointed to listen to people coming to Bengaluru from across the state with complaints, demands, or issues, including those staging protests or agitations. There is a need for such a separate secretariat," Shivakumar told reporters after the meeting.

The Chief Minister added: "Every day, two or three groups come here to protest. Someone has to meet them and understand their problems. It is important to determine whether their demands are legal or illegal. Officials must meet them, hear the facts, and un-



derstand their issues. Therefore, a decision has been made to establish a separate secretariat." Deputy Chief Minister G Parameshwara, Minister Ramalinga Reddy, Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh, Director General of Police MA Saleem, and other senior officials were present. Stating that the new government had begun its work from today, Shivakumar said that officials had been informed about the government's priorities and direction.

"We told them what is expected of them, and they, in turn, told us what they expect from us," he said. The CM said that his government would not tolerate influence based on caste or religion, and he asked officials not to yield to pressure. "Officials must re-

spond transparently to the feelings and concerns of the people. They have been instructed to work with a positive approach," he said. The Chief Minister also said that officials had been asked to prepare action plans for their respective departments within fifteen days. "Everything must be accountable. There should be basic common sense, and every problem has a solution. There must be a positive attitude and approach. I conveyed this to the officials," he added.

"I do not like reading or writing history; I prefer creating history. We must leave behind evidence of our work. Whenever we have had an opportunity, we have done so. This government will work in the same direction as well," he said.

Alva voices disappointment over all-male Karnataka Cabinet

Bengaluru, 4 June: Senior Congress leader Margaret Alva has expressed "deep disappointment" over the lack of women's representation in the new Council of Ministers in Karnataka headed by Chief Minister D K Shivakumar. "Congratulations to D K Shivakumarji on being sworn in as Karnataka CM. I wish him and his team success. I would have loved to see at least one Congress woman in the new Karnataka Cabinet sworn in today. Deeply disappointed that there isn't one," Alva posted on X on Wednesday. The senior Congress leader is a former Union Minister and has served as Governor of several states. Eleven of the 13 ministers inducted into the Shivakumar-led cabinet were part of the previous Siddaramaiah government in the state. Interestingly,

Siddaramaiah's son and MLC Yathindra was also inducted into the Ministry. However, no women representatives were included in the first phase of the Cabinet formation. Yathindra and U T Khader, who resigned as Legislative Assembly Speaker, are the only two new faces in Shivakumar's cabinet, while the others were part of Siddaramaiah's ministry. Senior Dalit MLA G Parameshwara was appointed Deputy Chief Minister. Laxmi Hebbalkar was the lone woman minister in the previous Siddaramaiah government. Meanwhile, Muslim religious leaders and clerics in Karnataka have demanded that five members from the community be accommodated in the state Cabinet, asserting that the Congress came to power with the support of Muslim voters.

LC polls: MVA candidate withdrawal from contest

Mumbai, 4 June: Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) candidate Bal Mane on Thursday withdrew his nomination for the Konkan local authorities constituency seat in the upcoming Maharashtra Legislative Council elections, alleging attempts at "horse trading".

The Shiv Sena (UBT) candidate, supported by MVA partners NCP (SP) and Congress, made the announcement before the media with BJP minister Nitesh Rane by his side, drawing attention in political circles. "I was supposed to receive signatures from my party's elected members as well as from other allies' representatives in municipal councils and nagar parishads. However, I sensed horse trading in it, which is not the culture of the coastal region of Maharashtra. I discussed it with my party leaders and decided to withdraw my nomination," Mane said.

Elections to 16 Legislative Council seats from the local self-government bodies and a by-poll from the Nagpur self-government body are scheduled for June 18, and votes will be counted on June 22. Members of local self-government bodies comprise the electoral

college for these polls. Scrutiny of nomination forms was completed on June 2, while the last date for withdrawal is June 4 (Thursday). When asked about Rane's presence, Mane called the BJP leader "a son of Konkan soil" and reiterated that his decision was aimed at preventing any malpractice in the election process.

The Kerala government on Thursday decided to impose a 52-day trawling ban in the state's coastal waters from June 10 to July 31. Chief Minister V D Satheesan announced the decision while briefing reporters after the Cabinet meeting. The annual ban is aimed at protecting marine resources and supporting the fish breeding season. During this period, trawling operations will not be permitted along the Kerala coast. They warned the Congress leadership that the party would face serious consequences in the next Assembly election if their demand is not met. The demand was raised at a gathering of Muslim leaders and clerics at the Hazrat Syed Fateh Shah Wali Dargah in Bellinagar here on Wednesday evening, where special prayers were also offered.